

LANGUAGE ACCESS

WORKGROUP OF THE MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF UTAH'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

WHAT IS LANGUAGE ACCESS?

The Language Access Workgroup addresses and researches the disproportionate COVID-19 impacts on Utah's diverse and multicultural communities. It is essential that everyone, regardless of their proficiency in English and literacy level, have meaningful access to programs, services, and activities at various stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well during recovery.

The workgroup is partnering with other community leaders and organizations to assist with efforts in policy review, implementing a plain language review structure, streamlining communication about COVID-19, increasing efficiency in language translation and identifying best practices in language and literacy considerations among culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

GOALS OF THE WORKGROUP



SHORT TERM GOALS

- Translate relevant documents related to COVID-19 document on tracking sheet (as of May 29, the Utah Dept. of Health through the partnership with the Veteran Affairs Office and the Utah National Guard has translated 66 documents).
- Highlight best practices, procedures and protocols for translation.
- Engage community input to identify gaps in language access.



LONG TERM GOALS



- Creation of a Language Access policy for COVID-19 response.
- Advocate to reverse or modify "English as the Official Language of Utah," State Code.
- Create a language translation and interpretation volunteer taskforce.

KEY TERMS

- **Accessible Language** - is language that accommodates people of all ages and abilities, including those with cognitive disabilities, people with low literacy skills, and speakers of English as a [second] language ([Bureau of Internet Accessibility](#)).
- **Plain Language** - is grammatically correct language that includes complete sentence structure and accurate word usage. Plain language is not unprofessional writing or a method of “dumbing down” or “talking down” to the reader ([National Institutes of Health](#)).

WORKGROUP-SPECIFIC COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Department of Veterans & Military Affairs
- Donell Pons, Reading Specialist
- Catholic Community Services
- Comunidades Unidas
- Salt Lake County
- Utah Department of Health
- Department of Veterans & Military Affairs
- Donell Pons, Reading Specialist

If organizations are interested in partnering with the language access workgroup, please contact Rozanna Benally-Sagg at rbenally-sagg@utah.gov. We will work with members of the workgroup to determine common areas of interest and program feasibility.

RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION FUND

The Racial Equity and Inclusion Fund is providing COVID-19 grants for community organizations and nonprofits who serve disproportionately impacted communities. Apply through August 21st at multicultural.utah.gov. Donations are also welcome.